

## ABSTRACT

To permit releasing an excessive rod pressure from a first hydraulic cylinder and also effectively using pressure oil of its rod chamber upon performing such an operation that pressure oil is fed to a bottom chamber of a second hydraulic cylinder, a hydraulic drive unit is provided with a boom cylinder, an arm cylinder, a communication line communicating a rod chamber of the boom cylinder and a bottom chamber of the arm cylinder with each other, and a switching valve arranged on the communication line for communicating or shutting off the communication line in accordance with a rod pressure of the boom cylinder. When an arm-crowding single operation is performed and by its digging counterforce, a rod pressure of the boom cylinder rises to a high pressure of at least a predetermined pressure, the switching valve is changed over from a shut-off position to a communicating position to feed pressure oil from the rod chamber of the boom cylinder to the bottom chamber of the arm cylinder. The boom cylinder is hence caused to automatically extend, thereby avoiding lifting of a body of a hydraulic excavator.